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CONTENTS

	Page
Provisional agenda (S/Agenda/2493)	1
Adoption of the agenda	1
The situation between Iran and Iraq	1

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2493rd MEETING

Held in New York on Monday, 31 October 1983, at 11 a.m.

President: Mr. Abdullah SALAH (Jordan).

Present: The representatives of the following States: China, France, Guyana, Jordan, Malta, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Poland, Togo, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Zaire, Zimbabwe.

Provisional agenda (S/Agenda/2493)

1. Adoption of the agenda

2. The situation between Iran and Iraq

The meeting was called to order at 11.50 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation between Iran and Iraq

1. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from Arabic*): Members of the Council have before them document S/16092, which contains the text of a draft resoluton submitted by Guyana, Togo and Zaire. I understand that the Council is prepared to take a vote on that draft resolution. Unless I hear an objection, I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

2. I shall now call on those members of the Council who wish to make statements before the voting.

3. Mr. SHAH NAWAZ (Pakistan): The fratricidal conflict between Iran and Iraq, which has just entered its fourth year, has claimed the lives of thousands of innocent men, women and children, and inflicted savage punishment on scores of population centres on both sides. The unremitting hostilities spell disaster for the fragile economies of the two countries, and, if continued much longer, will mortgage their future to the vagaries of history's incalculable forces.

4. Pakistan has been profoundly moved by this tragic conflict. The pangs of anguish at the prolongation of this war are made more poignant for us, not only by our geographical proximity to the centre of hostilities, not only by the ties of tradition and history, but, especially, because the flow of our Islamic heritage and ideology can be traced directly to the fountains of culture and religion which cascaded in these two great countries many centuries ago. It is for this reason that the death of every soldier, injury to every citizen and the destruction of every home, village and city produces a sense of personal loss and agony in every citizen of Pakistan throughout the length and breadth of the country.

5. The deep anguish of the people of Pakistan has been reflected in the continuous efforts which the President of Pakistan has made, both at the personal level and as a member of the Islamic Peace Committee, to bring about a resolution of the conflict. Neither the passage of time nor the lack of progress in our peace efforts so far has made us give up hope or abandon our quest for conciliation and peace between the two Islamic countries. We remain as fervently committed today as we were at the beginning of the conflict to seeking an end to this tragedy. We are encouraged by the trust and confidence which the two countries have reposed in us to persevere in our search for peace undaunted by the difficulties in our path.

6. Since the beginning of the war, the Security Council, the Islamic Peace Committee, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and individual peacemakers have been making efforts to bring about an end to this tragic conflict. None of these initiatives has been attended by success.

7. The Council first considered the Iran-Iraq conflict in late September 1980 [*2247th meeting*], when a presidential statement [*S/14190*] was followed by the adoption of a resolution [*resolution 479 (1980)*] calling upon the two parties to observe a cease-fire and settle their dispute through peaceful means. Since then, the Council has adopted two resolutions [*resolutions 514 (1982) and 522 (1982)*] and three presidential statements [*S/14244, S/15296 and S/15616*]. Simultaneously, mediation efforts have been made by Prime Minister Olof Palme of Sweden on behalf of the Secretary-General.

8. The magnitude of the issues involved in the conflict has, however, dwarfed the efforts reflected in the Council resolutions and the appeals in the presidential statements. One of the major reasons for the failure of the international bodies, in particular the Council, to take effective measures to bring about a cease-fire and terminate this tragic conflict has been Iran's perception of a lack of proper understanding of its point of view by the Council. The inability of the Council adequately to respond to Iran's concerns and misgivings, particularly during the early stages of the conflict, has caused Iran to form a somewhat impetuous judgement about the Council's capacity to play an effective role as a peacemaker.

9. While the capacity of the Council to influence the course of events in the Iran-Iraq conflict thus remains impaired, the fratricidal war continues not only to take a heavy toll of life and property on both sides, but to approach a flashpoint which could spark off a wider conflagration, with far-reaching consequences for world peace and security. In such an eventuality, the belligerent countries themselves and their neighbours in the region would be the greatest sufferers and the biggest losers.

10. When the Council addressed itself once again to this issue in its current session, it was our hope that a serious attempt would be made to evolve a resolution that would engage both parties in a process combining the virtue of an immediate containment of hostilities with the prospect of a comprehensive peace settlement to follow. The alternative was, as in the past, to adopt a resolution which the Council, in its judgement, deemed fair and necessary, even if it left one party to the conflict as disenchanted and aggrieved as ever. Resolutions of the latter category already exist, and the addition of another of that kind would hardly have a meaningful impact on the war.

11. In order to contain and bring to an end this three-year-old conflict, what is required above all is to promote a peace process in which both the parties become fully engaged. Given the great objective before us, that of restoring peace and tranquillity in a most sensitive area of the world, we need to summon all our resources of patience and courage to help us remain fully committed to this noble goal.

12. We regret the loss of an opportunity during our informal consultations when a sustained effort might have succeeded in getting the two parties involved in the process of consultations with the promise of a meaningful outcome. Instead of devoting more time to exhaustive consultations, we are hastening to adopt a document which is not fully matured and which lacks consensus. It is not likely to serve the objective we have in view. We must now wait for another propitious combination of circumstances for a renewed effort to activate a peace process.

13. It is as much for those reasons as for our concern for the preservation of Pakistan's impartial role as a member of the Islamic Peace Committee that we shall abstain from voting on the draft resolution which, nevertheless, has many positive features, such as the call for a cessation of hostilities, the emphasis on the continuing role of the Secretary-General, the affirmation of the right of free navigation in international waters in the region of the Persian Gulf, the call addressed to the belligerents to respect the integrity of other littoral States and the emphasis on the need for all States to exercise the utmost restraint and to refrain from any act which may lead to further escalation and widening of the conflict.

14. The prolongation of the Iran-Iraq conflict in a region which harbours so many other combustible issues exposes it to the danger of great-Power intervention. The ever-present threat of great-Power confrontation in that vital region has never been so imminent, nor the ability of the United Nations to avert a catastrophe so impaired as at present. It is, therefore, imperative for the States of the region, in particular for Iran and Iraq themselves, to demonstrate sensitivity to this grave situation, and hasten to make peace in the interest of their own survival and independence.

15. Mr. GAUCI (Malta): As we have stated on so many occasions and in every forum open to us, the Maltese Government views with great concern the outbreak of hostilities between Iraq and Iran, both countries staunch friends of Malta. On every single day, indeed practically at every single hour since the unfortunate outbreak of hostilities, it has been Malta's constant endeavour to encourage reconciliation between the two parties through a cease-fire and negotiations. We were therefore encouraged that both sides responded with detailed and written observations to the working paper which had been the focus of concentrated attention in the Council in the course of the informal consultations over the past two weeks or so. We have stated our position in the informal consultations and we wish to confirm our reasoned position publicly today.

16. As members no doubt would be aware, my delegation took the objective stand that the main concern of the Council at this stage should be to build on the initial responses received and to undertake urgent and energetic efforts to bring the two sides together in an open attempt to initiate, through the good offices of the Council, a constructive and, we would hope, positive dialogue. We believe that this approach would offer better possibilities than the mere passage of a draft resolution, even though it would undoubtedly be more time consuming. Since we know that one side has not considered that it has been given a reasonable hearing and sufficient consultation by the Council during its current consideration, we naturally favoured a prolongation of the exercise under way in the Council. Others, unfortunately, felt otherwise and pressed for a vote. It the vote will help reconciliation between the parties and bring about a cessation of hostilities, nothing would give my country greater pleasure. But for the reasons stated, we have misgivings and therefore, while not opposing the draft resolution, my delegation will have to abstain in the voting on it.

17. We remain open, within our modest means, to exercise renewed efforts to bring about the cherished hope of reconciliation and the cessation of the conflict between Iraq and Iran. This we pledge to both parties and to the Council. We hope that the time will soon come to bring about constructive negotiations with the continued and dedicated assistance of the Secretary-General.

18. Mr. TINOCO FONSECA (Nicaragua) (*interpretation from Spanish*): We should like to speak before the draft resolution on the situation between Iran and Iraq, sponsored by Guyana, Togo and Zaire [*S/16092*], is put to the vote.

19. Notwithstanding the efforts to reconcile the various views of the members of the Council, it has not been possible to produce a consensus document. We would have preferred that, in this matter of such special importance and delicacy, the actions of the Council be guided by a

conciliatory approach which would include the stand taken by the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries on this question. For various reasons it has not been possible for that approach, the only one that, in our opinion, can truly contribute to a solution of the problem, to prevail. We have friendly relations with Iran and Iraq, sister countries that are involved in a fratricidal and senseless struggle. Our friendship with both countries by virtue of the principles of non-alignment lead us to believe that there are better methods for dealing with this delicate and complex situation.

20. The draft resolution before us does not provide them. That is why we very much doubt that it will achieve the desired results. As we said in the informal consultations, should the draft resolution reflect the views of the majority of the members of the Council, we cannot object to the Council taking such action as it deems necessary in this situation. But we cannot endorse by an affirmative vote a decision which lacks any guarantee of effectiveness and even casts doubt on the ability of the parties to the controversy to bring about a relaxation of tension.

21. That is why we shall have to abstain in the voting on the draft resolution.

22. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from Arabic*): I shall now put to the vote the draft resolution submitted by Guyana, Togo and Zaire [*ibid.*,].

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour: China, France, Guyana, Jordan, Netherlands, Poland, Togo, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Zaire, Zimbabwe.

Against: None.

Abstaining: Malta, Nicaragua, Pakistan.

The draft resolution was adopted by 12 votes to none, with 3 abstentions [resolution 540 (1983)].

23. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from Arabic*): I shall now call on members of the Council wishing to make statements after the voting.

24. Mr. MEESMAN (Netherlands): It is on the Security Council that the Members of the United Nations have conferred the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. Confronted with acts of aggression or a breach of the peace, it is our collective duty to make constructive and objective recommendations and, if necessary, to take collective measures in order to bring about by peaceful means, and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, the adjustment or settlement of the conflict.

25. The cruel war between Iran and Iraq has now already lasted for more than three years. More than eight months have elapsed since the Council issued its last presidential statement on the conflict [*S/15616*], which now threatens to escalate even further into the region of the Gulf. Surely, if it is to live up to its special responsibility under the Charter of the United Nations, the Council simply cannot remain silent.

26. We should, however, recognize that past decisions of the Council have failed to bring about conditions leading to a peaceful settlement of the conflict in conformity with the principles of justice and international law.

27. If we are to achieve favourable conditions leading to an end of this war it is, in our opinion, essential for this Council not only to be as objective and balanced as possible in its assessment of the conflict but also to secure the agreement of both parties to co-operate with the decisions of the Council. It was with these important objectives in mind that the Netherlands delegation took an active part in the consultations which led to the draft resolution submitted by Guyana, Togo and Zaire. Because we are not dissatisfied with the result, the Netherlands voted in favour of the draft resolution.

28. However, as on previous occasions when the Council dealt with the situation between Iran and Iraq, one of the problems facing the Council remained how to secure the compliance of both parties with a resolution. I repeat that, for Council decisions to have any real impact on this serious and bitter conflict, a certain measure of co-operation on the part of both parties is indispensable. We seem to have been nearer to this important objective than on any previous occasion and we, for our part, therefore, regret that it has not been possible to explore the possibilities which might have presented themselves to the very end.

29. In conclusion, we wish to express the hope that this new resolution will serve as a first step to a more meaningful involvement of the United Nations in the search for a comprehensive, just and honourable settlement of the conflict in all its aspects that is acceptable to both sides. The important role which the Secretary-General could play to this end is underlined in paragraph 1 of the resolution, which requests him to continue his mediation efforts. If the belligerents were to heed the calls for the immediate cessation of all military operations against civilian targets and for the ending of all hostilities in the region of the Gulf, as expressed in paragraphs 2, 3 and 5, this could help to bring about the more favourable conditions required to end this bitter war by peaceful means. Last, but not least, we whole-heartedly agree with the call reiterated in paragraph 6 for all other States to exercise the utmost restraint and to refrain from any act which might lead to a further escalation and widening of the conflict.

30. Mr. TROYANOVSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (*interpretation from Russian*): Today's meeting of the Council reflects the profound concern of the overwhelming majority of Members of the Organization in connection with the continuing armed conflict between Iran and Iraq. This concern is whole-heartedly shared by the Soviet Union, which cannot fail to take an interest in eliminating dangerous hotbeds of tension in regions which are in the immediate vicinity of its frontiers.

31. Ever since this conflict broke out, the Soviet Union has consistently taken a clear and definite position—which is that it is essential to bring about an early cessation of military actions between the parties and the political settlement of the controversial issues by peaceful means. On the basis of this position of principle, and guided by its desire to promote efforts to end the tragic war between Iran and Iraq, the Soviet Union supported the previous unanimous decisions of the Security Council on this subject. Our country also expressed its support for the mediation mission of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and other constructive international efforts aimed at moving the conflict on to the path of a political settlement.

32. The Soviet Union has consistently and categorically opposed, and continues to oppose, any attempts on the part of external forces to exploit the Iran-Iraq conflict for intervention in the internal affairs of States in that area. It is the sovereign right of those countries and peoples to provide for their own security and to dispose freely of their own natural resources. Any armed intervention in this area, no matter what the pretext—including that of ensuring freedom of navigation in the Persian Gulf—is absolutely inadmissible. It must be absolutely clear to everyone that such intervention could have extremly dangerous consequences for the fate of peace in this region and throughout the world.

33. On the basis of these considerations, the Soviet delegation voted in favour of the draft resolution [*S/16092*].

34. Mr. LING Qing (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): The Chinese delegation has all along maintained that the war between Iran and Iraq should be settled by peaceful means. The Chinese delegation further holds that, in the present circumstances, the question of how to bring about the participation of both sides in the process of peaceful negotiations is an extremely important one. The Council should give serious consideration to this point when it decides to take action.

35. The draft resolution that has just been put to the vote, in which the Council calls for a cease-fire and requests the Secretary-General to continue with his mediation efforts and other positive factors, is consistent with China's position that the conflict between the two sides should be settled by peaceful means.

36. For this reason, the Chinese delegation voted in favour of the draft resolution.

37. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from Arabic*): The Council has concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.

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